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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Roosevelt Island Committee
Monday, November 2, 2026 – 6:30 PM
Conducted remotely via Zoom

MINUTES:

Present: Paul Krikler, Sharon Pope-Marshall, James Starace*.

**Public Member*

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 30

Paul Krikler welcomed all attendees to the meeting (2:41).

Item 1 - RIOC Updates (4:29)

Paul Krikler introduced Bryant Daniels, Assistant Vice President of Communications and Government Affairs of RIOC.

1. Mr. Daniels thanked the community for participating in the Halloween Parade and Extravaganza on Saturday, October 31, RIOC's biggest event, with close to 3,000 people marching down Main Street to Southpoint Park.
2. Mr. Daniels announced the final event of the year, the Holiday Tree Lighting, on Friday, December 4. Holiday lights and decorations will go up around the island in the coming weeks.
3. Mr. Daniels reminded attendees of the RIOC newsletter. The digital October edition went out last week and print copies will be distributed around the island this week.

Item 2 - Library Updates (11:32)

Paul Krikler introduced Librarian Kate Federiconi with the library update.

1. Ms. Federiconi announced that the library has just launched its second community conversation class with Cornell Tech.
2. Ms. Federiconi announced that the library now has access to Language Line, an on-demand interpretation service covering over 200 languages, through a handheld device that connects patrons with a live interpreter.
3. Ms. Federiconi announced modified hours for November:
    a. Closed Wednesday, November 11 for Veterans Day
    b. Open 2 PM to 5 PM on Friday, November 20
    c. Closing early at 3 PM on Wednesday, November 25
    d. Closed Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 for Thanksgiving
4. Programs:
    a. Winter donation - hats, mittens, scarves and blankets knitted over the last year by community members and the crochet club are available to pick up at the library.
    b. Musiquita - an eight-week interactive concert series of violin and piano, Tuesdays at 11 AM, for children ages 0 to 5 and their caregivers.

Item 3 - Community Updates (6:19)

Paul Krikler introduced Jean Monaco of the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery. The nursery runs a tuition-based program at 405 Main Street and a City-backed community-based program at 4 River Road with two 3-K and two Pre-K classrooms, which is full with a waiting list every year. City funding for the program has not increased since it was rolled out in 2014, and families have been fundraising to bridge a gap that grows each year. The Department of Education has asked the nursery to commit by November 9 to the number of seats it will host for the 2027-28 school year, and the nursery's board is not sure it can open. Attendees were asked to read the nursery's materials and use the QR codes to donate and to write to the City agencies that can help.

Paul Krikler encouraged anyone with a short announcement for their organization to use this part of the meeting.

Item 4 – Art Tour - Cathy Kross (14:26)

Cathy Kross presented the idea of an art walk on the island, which she has been discussing with the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA).

1. The walk would be a scavenger hunt, run through an app, of the island's artwork. Ms. Kross has counted 15 pieces, not including Fall for Arts.
2. Visitors who take a selfie in front of one of the sites would get a discount at participating merchants, such as a free soda with a meal or $5 off a purchase, to encourage tourists to spend money at island businesses.
3. Each site would include information about the piece and the artist, and the launch would be tied to the upgrade of Main Street.
4. Paul Krikler asked anyone who would like to get involved to email him at paul@krikler.com.

Item 5 – Tourist Survey - Paul Krikler (16:37)

Paul Krikler announced, on behalf of Tanya Morrissett who could not attend, that he, Ms. Morrissett and a few others will be at the tram on Saturday, November 7 at 3pm with a survey of five or six questions for tourists. The survey will ask what they think about priority boarding for residents and what it would take for them to leave the tram area and spend money on the island. Attendees were invited to join.

Item 6 – BJ Jones, President and CEO of RIOC (17:24)

Paul Krikler introduced the Roosevelt Island Refresh, a campaign he is working on with Cathy Kross, Tanya Morrissett and others to activate, open up, and clean up spaces on the island without changing its nature or architecture, and shared a QR code to join its WhatsApp group. Mr. Krikler then introduced BJ Jones, President and CEO of RIOC, who gave a presentation (20:35).

1. BJ Jones reviewed RIOC's mission and scale: 4.8 million tram and bus riders a year, over 2,000 tons of waste collected, 24/7 public safety, a free youth center serving over 120 youth, almost 2,900 fitness facility members, and over 2,600 affordable units.
2. Work over the past year included expanding the Petal Protectors program, filling 600 potholes, accessibility improvements on the west sidewalk, electric equipment and vehicles for the grounds team, more recycling containers, repurposing the sand pit and seating at Blackwell Playground, starting the repair of Eleanor's Pier, significant AVAC repairs, 14 free community events, Red Bus times in the Visit RI app, a 10-year extension of the master lease with the City, 24 youth center programs, the accelerated opening of Commons East, and two new hybrid buses on the way.
3. RIOC's second community-wide survey drew about 500 responses. Residents value the

island's safety and its parks and public spaces. The main requests were reliable transportation, repairs to existing infrastructure, more traffic enforcement, better retail and essential services, and more cultural events. Bryant Daniels has offered to return to present the results in detail.
4. Some requests have not been addressed because of bandwidth or finances, because they are policy-related (tram and bus passes), or because they are outside RIOC's purview (ferry service, which RIOC has raised with EDC).
5. Current projects include reopening Eleanor's Pier by the summer, fixes to the Girl Puzzle monument, redesigning the Blackwell Park playground, preparing for Main Street's road repair, wayfinding, public restrooms, the Blackwell House roof (which needs significant repair and Landmarks Preservation Commission approval), pedestrian safety and traffic enforcement, facilitating the steam plant Community Advisory Group, negotiating 10-year ground lease extensions with island buildings including affordability protections where applicable, a 12-month flood risk assessment, an RFP for tram operations, modernizing the Good Shepherd Chapel elevator, reimagining the Smallpox Hospital ruin with Friends of the Ruin, repurposing the old tram cabins, and a partnership with a Cornell design studio.
6. Upcoming work that will affect residents includes a major tram carriage overhaul and brake maintenance early in the calendar year, when ridership is lowest, which will significantly impact service. Structural assessments of the helix and the North Pier are also underway.
7. For the long term, RIOC has limited ability to finance capital projects and must draw on its reserves. RIOC is pursuing legislation to allow capital financing, new revenue streams, and City, State and federal funding, as well as a longer-term master lease extension, a discussion with the City about the condition of the steam tunnel, and plans for climate resilience and aging infrastructure (tram, Main Street, AVAC).
8. Residents can stay connected by reporting issues through Brightly, signing up for RIOC Advisories text alerts and the monthly newsletter, and attending RIOC board and committee meetings. The presentation will be posted on RIOC's website.

Paul Krikler thanked BJ Jones for an informative and transparent presentation and announced that Claudia Filomena, RIOC's Senior Director of Capital Planning, will attend the committee's next meeting on January 4.

Community Q&A (46:55):

1. Zora Boyadzhieva (ArchRI) - asked how far along the Blackwell Park playground redesign is, what the budget is, and whether the families who use it daily can be brought in before design begins. BJ Jones responded that the project is at a very early stage; RIOC is still digesting its community survey, will connect with ArchRI after the meeting, and will hold further engagement sessions.
2. Kalin Kresnitchki (ArchRI) - noted that the Housing Preseveration and Development (HPD) expects the smokestack demolition to begin around November 12 and asked for a personal commitment to obtain heavy-metal/lead testing and hands-on structural inspection results for the chimneys. BJ Jones responded that this information is the City's responsibility to provide and promised to continue the Community Advisory Group and to keep HPD and the Department of Buildings (DOB) at the table.
3. Susan Rosenthal (Living Library Garden / iDig2Learn volunteer) - asked about RIOC's approach to native plantings and requested an anti-littering campaign. BJ Jones favors native plantings, which are on the grounds team's list but need more time, welcomed partnering with iDig2Learn, and agreed to an anti-littering campaign.
4. Emanuella Grinberg - suggested using the island's LED displays and tram postings to publicize surveys, Community Advisory Group information and Brightly, and urged adaptive reuse of the steam plant. BJ Jones acknowledged the suggestions.
5. Tibor Krisko - commended RIOC's progress on transparency and asked that RIOC board members and residents be engaged earlier, and in both directions, in RIOC's decisions. BJ

Jones invited residents to RIOC's Operations Committee meeting, tentatively scheduled for November 19, and to sign up for RIOC's communications.

6. Rick O'Conor - asked whether RIOC plans anything different for holiday-season tram overcrowding, including priority for residents and workers, and whether RIOC has engaged the Governor's office on a resident priority pass. BJ Jones responded that RIOC has not engaged the Governor's office and its reading of the law on preferences is unchanged; RIOC monitors the tram daily and is pressing POMA on orderliness.
7. Amanda Kross - raised the lack of a medical facility on the island and vehicles driving on the promenade and in courtyards and asked who RIOC is working with at Cornell. BJ Jones responded that RIOC is talking with all in its network and encourage folks to share their ideas and contact; traffic tickets are up about 30% and physical changes are under review; the Cornell lead is Bob Balder.
8. Dr. Katherine Grimm - described the vacant medical office at 520 Main Street (nine exam rooms, a lab, treatment and radiology rooms) and her meetings before leaving the practice in 2022 with Cornell, NYU, Northwell, Mount Sinai and HHC; she believes a hospital-run practice, most logically Cornell, is the answer and asked how the community can advocate for one. BJ Jones responded that RIOC will keep raising the issue with every elected official and with Cornell Tech, and that the more advocacy the better.
9. Starlight Harris - asked what is planned for the Graduate Hotel, which closed abruptly last year, and raised the lack of a bank on the island. BJ Jones responded that RIOC continues outreach to find a bank; the hotel is Cornell Tech's property and recent public news points to a reopening, potentially with a new operator.
10. Zora Boyadzhieva - stated that no testing results on toxic materials in the steam plant have been shared at the Community Advisory Group meetings she attends, although demolition is imminent.
11. Kalin Kresnitchki - thanked RIOC for its work on the Smallpox Hospital and the old tram cabins and asked RIOC to survey residents on what should happen with the steam plant. BJ Jones responded that RIOC has not done so because the steam plant is not within RIOC's purview.
12. Sharon Pope-Marshall - noted that Mount Sinai is the closest emergency hospital to Roosevelt Island and asked why there has been no movement with Mount Sinai on a practice on the island. BJ Jones agreed that RIOC should approach Mount Sinai again even if it was not interested in the past.

Item 7 – Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

Item 8 – New Business

No items of New Business were discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Paul Krikler, Chair, Roosevelt Island Committee